

Message Text

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44

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 OES-06 INT-05 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00

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P R 291315Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 517

INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, BL, PA

SUBJECT: BOLIVIAN PLANS FOR PILCOMAYO RIVER

REF: ASUNCION 1760

1. HIGH BOLIVIAN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE FOREIGN MINISTER, HAVE IN THE LAST FEW DAYS MADE PUBLIC STATEMENTS ATTEMPTING TO CALM PARAGUAYAN FEARS CONCERNING A UNILATERAL BOLIVIAN DIVERSION ON THE WATERS OF THE PILCOMAYO RIVER.

2. ON APRIL 24 THE MINISTER OF PLANNING AND COORDINATION, GENERAL JUAN LECHIN SUAREZ, AFFIRMED THAT A VENEZUELAN CREDIT WOULD BE USED TO FINANCE FEASIBILITY STUDIES FOR AN IRRIGATION PROJECT IN THE TARIJA AREA AND THAT IF THE PILCOMAYO PROJECT PROVED FEASIBLE, BOLIVIA WOULD RESPECT ITS INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS REQUIRING CONSULTATION WITH PARAGUAY AND ARGENTINA. FOREIGN MINISTER ADRIAZOLA OFFICIALLY STATED APRIL 26 THAT BOLIVIAN CONDUCT WOULD FOLLOW THE GENERAL NORMS WHICH GOVERN

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THE UTILIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL RIVERS AND WATERS AND EXPRESSED

THE BELIEF THAT THIS DECLARATION SHOULD ALLAY DOUBTS ABOUT BOLIVIAN INTENTIONS. HE SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT BOLIVIA WOULD ADHERE TO THE PROVISIONS OF RESOLUTION 25 OF THE 1971 DECLARATION OF ASUNCION WHICH STATES THAT IN THE CASE OF INTERNATIONAL RIVERS WHICH FLOW THROUGH SUCCESSIVE COUNTRIES, EACH STATE MAY UTILIZE THE WATERS AS NECESSARY SO LONG AS IT DOES NOT APPRECIABLY DAMAGE THE INTERESTS OF ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE CUENCA. THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS ALSO SAID BOLIVIA'S POSITION TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE SPIRIT OF THE TRIPARTITE COMMISSION WHICH HAS BEEN STUDYING THE HYDROELECTRIC POTENTIAL OF THE PILCOMAYO.

3. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL ADVISED EMBOFF THAT A FOUR-MAN TECHNICAL LEVEL DELEGATION TO THE MEETING IN ASUNCION DEPARTED LA PAZ APRIL 28. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL ALSO SAID THAT THE VENEZUELAN LOAN HAS NOT BEEN FINALIZED AND THAT EVEN IF THE PROJECT DOES COME ABOUT, ITS SIZE INITIALLY WOULD BE LIMITED TO ABOUT 8-12,000 HECTARES, NOT ENOUGH TO SERIOUSLY AFFECT WATER FLOW.

4. COMMENT. BOLIVIA WILL LIKELY TREAD CAREFULLY ON THIS MATTER SINCE, AS MINISTER LECHIN POINTED OUT, BOLIVIA IS FAMILIAR WITH THE LAMENTABLE CONSEQUENCES RESULTING FROM UNILATERAL UTILIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL WATERS (CHILEAN DIVERSION OF THE WATERS OF THE RIO LAUCA PROVOKED THE 1963 RUPTURE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH BOLIVIA WHICH LASTED FOR ALMOST 13 YEARS). HOWEVER, LECHIN ALSO STRESSED THAT THE PILCOMAYO IS 80-90 PERCENT WITHIN BOLIVIAN TERRITORY. BOLIVIAN OFFICIALS ARE ALSO COMPARING THIS SITUATION TO THAT OF THE ITAIPU HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT AND POINT TO THE BRASILIAN POSITION IN CONFRONTING ARGENTINIAN COMPLAINTS IN THAT INSTANCE. THE BOLIVIANS NOTE THAT THE BRASILIANS HAVE OPERATED ON THE THEORY THAT COUNTRIES LOCATED UP RIVER MUST PROVIDE COUNTRIES DOWN RIVER WITH FULL DATE ON PROPOSED PROJECTS, BUT FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY.
STEDMAN

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